

A/2 --Naturally, the realization details and the implementation forms can be widely varied with respect to what has hereby been described and illustrated without in any way altering the principle of the present invention or going beyond its scope as defined by the claims set out below.--

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-16 inclusive without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please add the following new claims:

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--17. A container-filling device for lost-foam casting systems, including in a single operational combination:

- supporting means for containers with associated vibration means to set said containers into vibration;
- sand-feeding means for feeding dosed quantities of sand into said containers; and
- positioning means associated with said containers to position foam models into said containers and that are capable of sustaining said models both while the sand is being fed into the containers by said feeding means and while the containers containing said models are being vibrated by said vibration means;

wherein said positioning means include first gripping means capable of acting on said models and second gripping means capable of acting on the said containers, so that, with said first and second gripping means gripping, respectively, the models and the container, the models and the said container will be substantially connected to each other as a single piece, during the vibrational motion generated by said vibration means.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No. 09/512,815
Attorney Docket Q57966

18. A device in accordance with Claim 17, including control means to bring said first and second gripping means into their gripping position while said vibration means are operating.

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19. A device in accordance with Claim 17, wherein said first and second gripping means comprise a clamp structure.

20. A device in accordance with Claim 17, wherein said second gripping means have associate with them means for bringing them back into their open position.

21. A device in accordance with Claim 17, wherein said positioning means have associated with them a respective moving structure from which said positioning means can be disengaged.

22. A device in accordance with Claim 21, including also mobile equipment capable of performing a relative movement of lowering and raising with respect to said containers and wherein said sand-feeding means and said positioning means are carried by said mobile equipment.

23. A device in accordance with Claim 22, wherein said moving structure includes a frame that is connected as a single piece with the said mobile equipment and sustains said positioning means, which rest on it; the arrangement being such that, when the said mobile equipment is in its lowered position relative to aid container, said positioning means will become transferred to and rest on the said container, so that the moving structure will be disengaged from both said positioning means and said container.

24. A device in accordance with Claim 23, wherein said positioning means and the associated moving structure are provided with complementary centering formations capable of

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111

U.S. Appln. No. 09/512,815

Attorney Docket Q57966

ensuring accurate positioning of said positioning means and the said moving structure relative to the said container.

25. A device in accordance with Claim 24, wherein said complementary formations include at least one pin element capable of engaging with a corresponding cavity.

26. A device in accordance with Claim 24, wherein said complementary formations include a fork structure.

27. A device in accordance with Claim 17, further including:

-means for handling said models capable of transferring said models to said positioning mean;

-shape recognition means associated with said handling means and capable of recognizing, among a set of possible models, a particular type of models that, at that particular moment, is being carried by the handling means, generating a corresponding type identification signal.

28. A device in accordance with Claim 27, further including marking means that are individually associated with said containers and are capable of being read by processing means capable of performing operations on said containers, so that said operations performed on each of said containers are specialized in accordance with the type identification signal generated by said recognition means for the particular type of model inserted in said container.--

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please delete the present abstract and replace it with the following new abstract attached on a separate unnumbered sheet.